



HALMATURUS AGILIS, Gould.

HALMATURUS AGILIS, *Gould.*

Agile Wallaby.

HEAD AND FORE PART OF THE BODY, OF THE NATURAL SIZE.

It will be seen that Mr. Richter has indulged in a little variation as regards the opposite illustration; the animal, however, is faithfully portrayed, both as regards its form and colouring and the texture of the short adpressed hair which covers its body. All these points are seen to much greater advantage than in the Jerboa-like reduced figures on the next Plate: it is, indeed, impossible to do justice to the appearance of these animals in such small representations of them.

It will be seen that the full-sized head and fore quarters are more darkly coloured than the reduced figures; but as such differences really exist in the various specimens, no apology is necessary for the seeming discrepancy. The time, we may suppose, is not far distant when the northern part of the great southern continent will be peopled by our enterprising settlers. That country contains the bones of my worthy assistant Gilbert, who fell a sacrifice to the treachery of the natives, while arduously prosecuting his researches for the advancement of science and the furtherance of the present work. It is well known that he was in company with the celebrated explorer Dr. Leichardt, who, in like manner, found a resting-place in that *terra incognita*; but it is still unknown in what precise locality his fate was sealed. This country of the Kangaroos is second to none in the sacrifice of valuable lives in the various attempts which have been made to unfold the hidden recesses of its treasures.



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Halmaturus agilis, Gould in Proc. of Zool. Soc., part ix. p. 81.—Ib. Monograph of the Macropodidæ, pl. —
Hamb. et Jacq. Voy. au Pole Sud, pl. 19.—Gould, Mon. of Macropodidæ, pl. .
————— *Binoë*, Gould in Proc. of Zool. Soc., part x. p. 58.
Macropus (Halmaturus) agilis, Waterh. Nat. Hist. of Mamm., vol. i. p. 108.

THIS species of Wallaby may be readily distinguished from every other by its short, wiry, adpressed hair, and the almost uniform sandy-brown colour of the body; the male is also remarkable for having very powerful incisors, and for having the outer toe much developed, whence results a deep cleft between it and the middle one; the head is also longer and more pointed than in any other species which I have seen.

The Agile Wallaby appears to be abundant on all the low swampy lands of the northern coast of Australia. I have seen many specimens from the Cobourg Peninsula; and it is common both near the settlement of Port Essington and at Raffles' Bay. I have also had others placed at my disposal for the purpose of describing by Mr. Bynoe of H.M.S. the Beagle, which were collected on the shores of Torres Straits. It is stated to be a most agile species, readily eluding the dogs employed in hunting it by its extreme activity in leaping among the high grass; when chased it frequently seeks shelter in the thick beds of mangroves, passing over the muddy flats in such a manner as almost to baffle pursuit.

In size, when full-grown, the male is nearly equal to *H. Ualabatus*.

In some notes by Mr. John M'Gillivray on the animals observed by him at Port Essington, it is stated that a young one, very large in proportion to the size of the mother, was taken from the pouch of a female shot by him at Barrow's Bay, and that it did not differ in its colouring in any respect. He adds that the species is very common at Port Essington, where it frequents the tall grass of the low grounds, especially where the Pandanus-trec abounds, under the shelter of which it generally forms its lair. It is extremely active in its movements, and when pursued by dogs makes for the nearest jungle or mangrove thicket.

I now believe the *Halmaturus Binoë*, described by me as a distinct species in the 10th Part of the "Proceedings of the Zoological Society of London," to be merely the young of this animal, and I have consequently placed that name among its synonyms.

Fur rather short, adpressed, and harsh to the touch; general colour sandy-yellow; the upper surface of the head and body freely pencilled with blackish, the hairs being of this colour at the point; chin, throat and chest dull white; abdomen yellow, the hairs terminated with white; limbs pale sandy-yellow externally and white on their inner side, the arms externally pencilled with blackish; tarsi nearly white, passing into rusty on the toes; lips whitish, and a whitish mark from the lip to beneath the eye, parallel with which is another of a dusky hue; ears white within, externally sandy-yellow at the base and broadly margined with black at the apex, and with a narrow black line along the inner edge; on each side of the rump an oblique whitish line; tail sparingly clothed with nearly white hairs, except at the base, which is like the body; the tip of the tail black.

		Male.	
		feet.	inches.
Length from the nose to the base of the tail		5	3
„ of tail		2	6
„ „ tarsus and toes, including the nail			10
„ „ arms and hand, including the nails			9
„ „ face from the tip of the nose to the base of the ear.			6
„ „ ear			3

The first of the accompanying Plates represents the head of a dead animal of the natural size; the second, reduced figures of both sexes.